

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner enter this Amendment After Final Action under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 and reconsider the application as amended for allowance. Applicant respectfully submits that the above amendments place the claims in condition for allowance and/or in better condition for appeal. The following remarks are responsive to the Final Office Action mailed October 17, 2007.

Office Action Rejections Summary

Claims 14-16, 18 and 19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,322,987 of Thomas et al. ("Thomas").

Claims 14-16, 18 and 19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,293,287 of Tzur et al. ("Tzur"). In particular, the Office Action states:

Claims 14-23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Publication No. 2002/0025408 of Davis ("Davis") in view of WO98/01890 of Granneman ("Granneman") and "J. Vac. Sci. Technol. B Vol. 16, No. 6, Nov/Dec 1998, pages 3825-3829 of Wu et al. ("Wu").

Claim 24 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Davis in view of Granneman and Wu, as applied to claims 14-23 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,696,220 of Bailey et al. ("Bailey").

Status of Claims

Claims 14-24 are pending in the application. Claim 14 has been amended to more properly define a preexisting claim limitation. The amended claims are supported by the specification. No claims have been added. No new matter has been added. No claims have been canceled by this amendment.

Claim Rejections

Claims 14-16, 18 and 19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Thomas. Claims 14-16, 18 and 19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,293,287 of Tzur et al. ("Tzur").

Applicants thank the Examiner for the guidance provided in his response to arguments where the Examiner indicated that the instant specification discloses subject matter which can be employed to overcome the Thomas and Tzur references. The Examiner asserts that both Thomas and Tzur meet the claim 14 limitation of "directing." Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's assertion that the passive result of air necessarily entering the inner diameter hole in both Thomas and Tzur would meet the limitation of "directing." It is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's interpretation is an unsubstantiated conclusion that is not supported by any evidence.

Moreover, applicants have previously provided evidence that one of ordinary skill in the art would understand "directing" to refer to an active result. The evidence being that the Thomas patent, itself, uses the term "directs" to describe its configuration where gas is actively pointed at the outer edge of a disk. (See Figure 1C and col. 4, lines 42-43 of Thomas).

Nevertheless, in order to expedite prosecution, claim 14 is being amended to further define the preexisting "directing" limitation to recite that the gas is directed into the inner diameter hole of the disk "through a gas port aimed toward the inner diameter hole of the disk." It is submitted that the amendment to the claim 14 clearly distinguishes claim 14 over the Thomas and Tzur references and that claim 14 and its dependent claims 15-16, 18 and 19 are patentable over the cited references.

Claims 14-23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Publication No. 2002/0025408 of Davis ("Davis") in view of WO98/01890 of

Granneman ("Granneman") and "J. Vac. Sci. Technol. B Vol. 16, No. 6, Nov/Dec 1998, pages 3825-3829 of Wu et al. ("Wu").

Applicant maintains that there is no motivation to combine the cited references in the purported manner and respectfully submits that the Examiner's motivation statement does not provide any technical reasoning as to how one of ordinary skill in the art would modify the semiconductor wafer equipment of Granneman to process a disk containing a hole of Wu. Applicants submit that it would not be proper to modify Granneman in the manner proposed by the Office Action in order to arrive at applicant's claim 14, because such a modification would require a substantial reconstruction and redesign of the elements shown in the Granneman semiconductor wafer processing system, as well as a change in the basic principle under which the Granneman construction was designed to operate. In re Rattie, 270 F.2d 810 (CCPA 1959); MPEP 2143.01. If one were to replace the wafer of Granneman with a disk containing a hole, it would not change the teachings of Granneman that the gas is distributed along both "surfaces" of the disk. The Examiner has not provided any evidence that the system of Granneman, designed to float a hole-less wafer, could actually float a disk containing a hole because the introduction of a hole in the Granneman system could throw off the air flow balance under which it was designed to operate.

Therefore, it is submitted that claim 14 is patentable over the cited references. It is submitted that claims 15-23 are also patentable over the cited references because claims 15-23 depend from and, therefore, include the limitations of claim 14 noted above.

Claim 24 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Davis in view of Granneman and Wu as applied to claims 14-23 above, and further in view of Bailey. Claim 24 depends from and, therefore, includes the limitations of claim 14 noted above. It is submitted that Bailey fails to cure the deficiencies of the references

noted above in regards to claim 14 and, therefore, claim 24 is patentable over the cited references.

In conclusion, applicants respectfully submit that in view of the arguments set forth herein, the applicable rejections have been overcome.

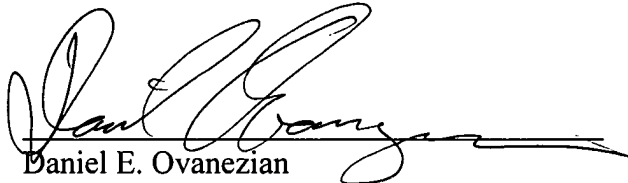
If the Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Daniel Ovanezian at (408) 720-8300.

If there are any additional charges, please charge our Deposit Account No. 02-2666.

Respectfully submitted,

BLAKELY, SOKOLOFF, TAYLOR & ZAFMAN LLP

Dated: 12/17, 2007


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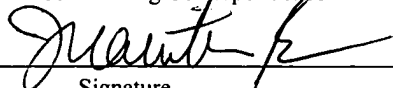
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